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THE BANK PICKET.

THE guard—for as a guard it is considered by some regiments—which proceeds every evening to the Bank of England, presents an example of several somewhat unique military duties that fall to the lot of the men of the Foot-guards; and whether this party be regarded as a guard or as a picket, its duty differs in more than one respect from that of the ordinary guards mounted at palaces or public offices in the metropolis. The men engaged in the protection of these latter buildings are relieved every twenty-four hours. Sentinels are continually maintained both by day and by night at certain points, or 'posts,' as their positions are technically termed; and as many of them are more for ornament than for other objects, the men are frequently placed in pairs in the daytime. The Bank Picket, however, only remains on duty from sunset to sunrise in winter; and in the summer season it is within the precincts of the Bank during a similar number of hours. As the place is vacated by the picket in the busy hours of the day, its protectors cannot be said to be 'relieved' at all, in the proper military signification of that word, for it implies the immediate substitution of fresh men in the places of those removed, whether in relation to a whole guard or to a single sentry. In at least one further matter the picket varies from the stereotyped guards, which form a great item in the occupation of the soldier, and this is in the payment of its members for their services by the Bank authorities. In short, to soldiers the Bank Picket is equivalent to what policemen call 'special duty.'

This picket, or guard, is of immemorial origin; perhaps it is contemporaneous with the existence of the Bank itself. It has at least been kept up without a break since the great riots in 1780, known as the Gordon riots. The number of soldiers employed in this duty has no doubt varied in the course of a century or more; but for many years past, the picket has been composed of the same representatives of each rank

as at present. One subaltern officer commands the whole party. The latter consists of two sergeants and two corporals, together with twenty-nine private soldiers and a drummer-boy. These soldiers, forming in every respect a properly arranged guard, reach the Bank from five to seven o'clock in the evening, according to the season of the year; the latter hour being the time of 'mounting' in midsummer. They have to march some miles through the busy streets, and along the Thames Embankment, which intervenes between the barracks at Chelsea or St James's Park and their destination at the Bank of England. Some officers, who wish to expedite this journey or to avoid getting drenched in wet weather, conduct the party by train on the Underground Railway. This, however, is prohibited in some regiments; and is not a frequent occurrence in others, except in returning to the West End in the morning, when the easier and quicker mode of travel is very beneficial, especially in winter.

Having arrived at the Bank, each member of the picket receives his remuneration, which varies in amount according to the rank of the payee. The officer, soon after he 'mounts' duty, has dinner provided for him; and he is permitted to invite one friend—usually a comrade-officer—to dine with him within the Bank. Supplementary to the dinner is an allowance of wine, consisting either of one bottle of port, or of an equal quantity of sherry, according to the choice of the officer. He is also recompensed pecuniarily for bearing the responsibility of protecting the building and its contents for the night; but we have been unable to ascertain the exact sum paid to him. Each sergeant is presented with half-a-crown; the corporals with eighteenpence; and every private soldier gets a shilling. The drummer-boy, like his comrades of greater stature, is also entitled to a shilling. Popular rumour asserts that these shillings are invariably brand-new coins, fresh from the Mint. It is commonly supposed that they have not previously been in circulation: but this seems to be a

mistaken impression, for the writer has received many a shilling when 'on Bank' which bore evident traces of having passed much of its existence beyond the walls of the Bank. Perhaps the men may in some former period have been paid with new coins, and the tradition of the custom still retain a place in the minds of our civilian friends.

When the ceremony of receiving the money from a Bank official is completed, a blanket is issued to each man, in which, while not on sentry during the night, he can envelop his limbs, and try to court repose on the somewhat hard form of couch offered by the wooden guard-bed. A certain number of greatcoats are also brought forth from a sort of cupboard, for the use of the sentinels. These garments are decorated with very large buttons, each of which bears stamped upon it the words 'Bank of England' in very legible characters. Being of an antiquated cut and appearance, the coats form a rather incongruous addition to the uniform of a Guardsman of modern times. That they have been worn by many generations of pickets is made apparent not only by their obsolete pattern, but also by their display of patches and of other mending arts of the tailor. After all, the coats are not in great requisition; for the majority of the sentries are under cover, and not exposed to cold, being posted in various apartments in the interior of the buildings.

The guardroom is situated in what may be described as a subterranean region, the descent to which is accomplished by the aid of several flights of steps. Lofty buildings, pierced by but few windows, rise above and around the entrance to this place, leaving a very circumscribed portion of the sky open to the view of a sentry, who paces round a few square yards of pavement below, and takes charge of the 'guardroom door,' a duty of some moment to a private soldier. Though not essentially different from other apartments designed for similar purposes, the guardroom is on the whole a very gloomy example of its species, chiefly on account of its somewhat unfavourable position. Hardly any daylight can find its way in, and the room has to be illuminated by numerous gas jets. It is sometimes thought by the men of the Guards that so great a profusion of gas is injurious. Frequently, one of their first steps on taking possession is to reduce the extent of the supposed evil by turning off most of the lights. Whether or not they thus render the guardroom more salubrious, the apparent effect of their efforts to make it so is the conversion of the place into what reminds one forcibly of a dungeon. But the darkness is not so impenetrable as to conceal from view the more permanent black inhabitants of this part of the Bank. These are beetles of extraordinary proportions, which make nocturnal rambles, probably in quest of the crumbs left from the evening repast of the picket. In winter, great fires are kept blazing through the night, which tend to give the guardroom a more cheerful aspect. A selection of books, embracing a considerable variety of literature, is supplied for the diversion of the men during their vigil; and there is also a small library for the use of the officer. The former collection has existed for a long time, and has no doubt proved a great boon to the picket, compelled as it is to remain most of the time in

the guardroom. The well-thumbed condition of the greater part of the volumes testifies to the amount of handling they have been subjected to; and the renewal of those which degenerate into a tattered state, shows that the Bank authorities are desirous of rendering the occupants of their guardroom as comfortable and contented as possible.

The officer in command is accommodated in rooms adjacent to the quarters of his men. They are furnished with every regard to convenience and comfort. His servant, who arrives close on the heels of the armed party, attends to him during his term of occupation. The officer, like the remainder of the picket, can on no pretence whatever leave the Bank premises until his tour of duty is finished. This is an exception to the rule of other like duties in London, for there, officers are not so much restricted in their movements, though at certain times they are bound to be present with their guards.

With the necessary object of ministering to the more material wants of the men of the Bank Picket, a canteen or shop on a small scale is opened by a vendor, who is—or was recently—a Jew, well known to the brigade of Guards from his not too modest tariff. He exposes his materials for supper in a cellar-like recess in the wall of a dark passage not unlike a miniature railway tunnel, which leads to regions unexplored by the picket. Having a sufficient stock of eatables, together with a cask of porter, this man does an extensive business till near midnight, when he departs, carrying with him a large proportion of the shillings paid to the soldiers. It is erroneously thought by some uninitiated persons that these refreshments are the gift of the Bank to its nocturnal guardians; whereas everything procured from the canteen-man has to be paid for by the soldiers themselves, and, so far as we are aware, this has always been the case.

But before this store is thrown open, one of the sergeants reads the 'orders' for the regulation of the duty and general conduct of the picket. These chiefly relate to the rules to be observed by the sentries—how they are to act in certain exigences, such as an outbreak of fire, or the like. One paragraph limits the allowance of porter to two pints per man; another regulation prohibits members of the picket from removing their belts, pouches, or ammunition from their persons while within the Bank. The latter is a law on all guard-duty. It is, however, not so strictly enforced at the Bank as elsewhere, the shelter of the blankets allowing a man some latitude in the arrangement of his accoutrements while lying on the guard-bed. A third rule has for its object the suppression of gambling, and also the prevention of soldiers 'working at their trade' while 'on Bank.' The former of these decrees was probably called into existence by attempts to organise card-parties in retired corners of the guardroom; the latter is a universal order on all guards in the metropolis.

In regard to the amount of sentry-duty demanded of the men, the Bank Picket can scarcely be said to be exacting. On the contrary, the majority of the soldiers are only once called upon to perform 'sentry-go,' and then it merely lasts for one hour. The limited number of men who are required a second time have some hours of an interval, during which they may

generally enjoy a fair night's rest. The sentries are posted chiefly, as we have already noted, inside rooms in the buildings. One man, as already stated, is placed at the foot of the shaft-like opening to the top of the structures in front of the guardroom entrance. An important item of his duty is to notice the expiry of the hour, and to apprise the next relief of this fact by shouting out 'Sentry-go!' so as to rouse those who may be dozing within the room. Another sentry paces up and down a court where it is reported that the bank-notes withdrawn from circulation are burned; at all events, there are numerous furnaces there. A third man is posted in a circular hall called the 'rotunda,' which is devoted to some part of the business of the Bank. These sentries are increased by additional ones in the middle of the night, who remain till the departure of the picket in winter, and till daylight arrives in summer. The officer goes his 'rounds' at eleven o'clock, when he visits each sentry, and having heard all of them cry out 'All's well,' he retires to his rooms, and probably to bed. He is seen no more till the picket parades to 'dismount' in the morning. Besides the soldiers, there are many officials on duty in the Bank by night. Capacious chairs are provided for these functionaries; and they appear to sleep comfortably—and sometimes audibly—in them for hours together, long practice having accustomed their senses to the noise of 'changing guard.'

The picket leaves the Bank at six o'clock in the morning in summer, and at seven, or a little later, in the depth of winter. The men within the guardroom are usually by these times sound asleep. On the drummer summoning them to fall in, by means of a few strokes on the sheepskin of his instrument, there ensues great activity in adjusting knapsacks, or performing hasty ablutions at the neighbouring pump, which is situated in the tunnel we have alluded to. An official arrives to take over the blankets and greatcoats, and also the library; and the senior sergeant completes his 'report' by inserting a clause therein affirming that these articles are 'present and in good order.' This done, he takes it to the officer for signature, and finally hands it to the drummer-boy to leave at the Horse-guards, as the party passes through Whitehall on its homeward march. The men having meantime been drawn up by the remaining sergeant, the officer draws his sword and marches them out of the Bank.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

BY MRS OLIPHANT.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE were voices in the drawing-room as Frances ran up-stairs, which warned her that her own appearance in her morning dress would be undesirable then. She went on with a sense of relief to her own room, where she threw aside the heavy cloak, lined with fur, which her aunt had insisted on wrapping her in. It was too grave, too ample for Frances, just as the other presents she had received were too rich and valuable for her wearing. She took the emerald brooch out of her pocket in its little case, and thrust it away into a drawer, glad to be rid of it, wondering whether it would be her

duty to show it, to exhibit her presents. She divined that Lady Markham would be pleased, that she would congratulate her upon having made herself agreeable to her aunt, and perhaps repeat that horrible encouragement to her to make what progress she could in the affections of the Cavendishes, because they were rich and had no heirs. If, instead of saying this, Lady Markham had but said that Mrs Cavendish was lonely, having no children, and little good of her husband's society, how different it might have been. How anxious then would Frances have been to visit and cheer her father's sister! The girl, though she was very simple, had a great deal of inalienable good sense; and she could not but wonder within herself how her mother could make so strange a mistake.

It was late before Lady Markham came up-stairs. She came in shading her candle with her hand, gliding noiselessly to her child's bedside. 'Are you not asleep, Frances? I thought you would be too tired to keep awake.'

'O no. I have done nothing to tire me. I thought you would not want me down-stairs, as I was not dressed.'

'I always want you,' said Lady Markham, stooping to kiss her. 'But I quite understand why you did not come. There was nobody that could have interested you. Some old friends of mine, and a man or two whom Markham brought to dine; but nothing young or pleasant.—And did you have a tolerable day? Was poor Charlotte a little less gray and cold? But Constance used to tell me she was only cold when I was there.'

'I don't think she was cold. She was—very kind; at least that is what she meant, I am sure,' said Frances, anxious to do her aunt justice.

Lady Markham laughed softly, with a sort of suppressed satisfaction. She was anxious that Frances should please. She had herself, at a considerable sacrifice of pride, kept up friendly relations, or at least a show of friendly relations, with her husband's sister. But notwithstanding all this, the tone in which Frances spoke was balm to her. The cloak was an evidence that the girl had succeeded; and yet she had not joined herself to the other side. This unexpected triumph gave a softness to Lady Markham's voice.

'We must remember,' she said, 'that poor Charlotte is very much alone. When one is much alone, one's very voice gets rusty, so to speak. It sounds hoarse in one's throat. You may think, perhaps, that I have not much experience of that. Still, I can understand; and it takes some time to get it toned into ordinary smoothness. It is either too expressive, or else it sounds cold. A great deal of allowance is to be made for a woman who spends so much of her life alone.'

'O yes,' cried Frances, with a burst of tender compunction, taking her mother's soft white dimpled hand in her own, and kissing it with a fervour which meant penitence as well as enthusiasm. 'It is so good of you to remind me of that.'

'Because she has not much good to say of me? My dear, there are a great many things that you don't know, that it would be hard to explain to you: we must forgive her for that.'

And for a moment Lady Markham looked very grave, turning her face away towards the vacancy of the dark room with something that sounded like a sigh. Her daughter had never loved her so much as at this moment. She laid her cheek upon her mother's hand, and felt the full sweetness of that contact enter into her heart.

'But I am disturbing your beauty-sleep, my dove,' she said; 'and I want you to look your best to-morrow; there are several people coming to-morrow.—Did she give you that great cloak, Frances? How like poor Charlotte! I know the cloak quite well. It is far too old for you. But that is beautiful sable it is trimmed with; it will make you something. She is fond of giving presents.' Lady Markham was very quick, full of the intelligence in which Mrs Cavendish failed. She felt the instinctive loosening of her child's hands from her own, and that the girl's cheek was lifted from that tender pillow. 'But,' she said, 'we'll say no more of that to-night,' and stooped and kissed her, and drew her covering about her with all the sweetness of that care which Frances had never received before. Nevertheless, the involuntary and horrible feeling that it was clever of her mother to stop when she did and say no more, struck chill to the girl's very soul.

Next day Mr Ramsay came in the afternoon, and immediately addressed himself to Frances. 'I hope you have not forgotten your promise, Miss Waring, to give me all the *renseignements*. I should not like to lose such a good chance.'

'I don't think I have any information to give you—if it is about Bordighera, you mean. I am fond of it; but then I have lived there all my life. Constance thought it dull.'

'Ah yes, to be sure—your sister went there. But her health was perfect. I have seen her go out in the wildest weather, in days that made me shiver. She said that to see the sun always shining bored her. She liked a great deal of excitement and variety—don't you think?' he added after a moment, in a tentative way.

'The sun does not shine always,' said Frances, piqued for the reputation of her home, as if this were an accusation. 'We have gray days sometimes, and sometimes storms, beautiful storms, when the sea is all in foam.'

He shivered a little at the idea. 'I have never yet found the perfect place in which there is nothing of all that,' he said. 'Wherever I have been, there are cold days—even in Algiers, you know. No climate is perfect. I don't go in much for society when I am at a health-place. It disturbs one's thoughts and one's temper, and keeps you from fixing your mind upon your cure, which you should always do. But I suppose you know everybody there?'

'There is—scarcely any one there,' she said, faltering, remembering at once that her father was not a person to whom to offer introductions.

'So much the better,' he said more cheerfully. 'It is a thing I have often heard doctors say, that society was quite undesirable. It disturbs one's mind. One can't be so exact about hours. In short, it places health in a secondary place, which is fatal. I am always extremely rigid on that point. Health—must go before all.—Now, dear Miss Waring, to details, if you please.' He took

out a little note-book, bound in Russia, and drew forth a jewelled pencil-case. 'The hotels first, I beg; and then the other particulars can be filled in. We can put them under different heads: (1) Shelter; (2) Exposure; (3) Size and convenience of apartments; (4) Nearness to church, beach, &c.—I hope you don't think I am asking too much?'

'I am so glad to see that you have not given him up because of Con,' said one of Lady Markham's visitors, talking very earnestly over the tea-table, with a little nod and gesture to indicate of whom she was speaking. 'He must be very fond of you, to keep coming; or he must have some hope.'

'I think he is rather fond of me, poor Claude!' Lady Markham replied without looking round. 'I am one of the oldest friends he has.'

'But Constance, you know, gave him a terrible snub. I should not have wondered if he had never entered the house again.'

'He enters the house almost every day, and will continue to do so, I hope. Poor boy, he cannot afford to throw away his friends.'

'Then that is almost the only luxury he can't afford.'

Lady Markham smiled upon this remark. 'Claude,' she said, turning round, 'don't you want some tea? Come and get it while it is hot.'

'I am getting some *renseignements* from Miss Waring. It is very good of her. She is telling me all about Bordighera, which, so far as I can see, will be a very nice place for the winter,' said Ramsay, coming up to the tea-table with his little note-book in his hand.—'Thanks, dear Lady Markham. A little sugar, please. Sugar is extremely nourishing, and it is a great pity to leave it out in diet—except, you know, when you are inclining to fat. Banting is at the bottom of all this fashion of doing without sugar. It is not good for little thin fellows like me.'

'I gave it up long before I ever heard of Banting,' said the stout lady, for it need scarcely be said that there was a stout lady; no tea-party in England ever assembled without one. 'The individual in the present case was young, and rebellious against the fate which had overtaken her—not of the soft, smiling, and contented kind.'

'It does us real good,' said Claude, with his softly pathetic voice. 'I have seen one or two very sad instances where the fat did not go away, you know, but got limp and flaccid, and the last state of that man was worse than the first.—Dear lady, I think you should be very cautious. To make experiments with one's health is really criminal.—We are getting on very nicely with the *renseignements*. Miss Waring has remembered a great deal. She thought she could not tell me anything; but she has remembered a great deal.'

'Bordighera? Is that where Constance is?' the ladies said to each other round the low tea-table where Lady Markham was so busy. She smiled upon them all, and answered 'Yes,' without any tinge of the embarrassment which perhaps they hoped to see.

'But of course as a resident she is not living among the people at the hotels. You know how the people who live in a place hold themselves

apart; and the season is almost over. I don't think that either tourists or invalids passing that way are likely to see very much of Con.'

In the meantime, Frances, as young Ramsay had said, had been honestly straining her mind to 'remember' what she could about the Marina and the circumstances there. She did not know anything about the east wind, and had no recollections of how it affected the place. She remembered that the sun shone in at the windows all day; which of course meant, as he informed her, a southern exposure; and that in all the hotel gardens, as well as elsewhere, there were palms growing, and hedges of lemons and orange trees; and that at the *Angleterre*—or was it the *Victoria*?—the housekeeper was English; along with other details of a similar kind. There were no balls; very few concerts or entertainments of any kind; no afternoon tea-parties. 'How could there be?' said Frances, 'when there were only ourselves, the Gaunts, and the Durants.'

'Only themselves, the Gaunts, and the Durants,' Ramsay wrote down in his little book. 'How delightful that must be.—Thank you so much, Miss Waring. Usually, one has to pay for one's experience; but thanks to you, I feel that I know all about it. It seems a place in which one could do one's self every justice. I shall speak to Dr Lull about it at once. I have no doubt he will think it the very place for me.'

'You will find it dull,' said Frances, looking at him curiously, wondering was it possible that he could be sincere, or whether this was his way of justifying to himself his intention of following Constance. But nothing could be more steadily matter-of-fact than the young man's aspect.

'Yes, no doubt I shall find it dull. I don't so very much object to that. At Cannes and those places there is a continual racket going on. One might almost as well be in London. One is seduced into going out in the evening, doing all sorts of things. I think your place is an ideal place—plenty of sunshine and no amusements. How can I thank you enough, Miss Waring, for your *renseignements*? I shall speak to Dr Lull without delay.'

'But you must recollect that it will soon be getting very hot; and even the people who live there will be going away. Mr Durant sometimes takes the duty at Homburg or one of those places; and the Gaunts come home to England; and even we'—

Here Frances paused for a moment to watch him, and she thought that the pencil with which he was still writing down all these precious details, paused too. He looked up at her, as if waiting for further information. 'Yes?' he said interrogatively.

'Even we—go up among the mountains where it is cooler,' she said.

He looked a little thoughtful at this; but presently threw her back into perplexity by saying calmly: 'That would not matter to me so much, since I am quite sincere in thinking that when one goes to a health-place, one should give one's self up to one's health. But unfortunately, or perhaps I should say fortunately, Miss Waring, England is just as good as anywhere else in the summer; and Dr Lull has not thought it

necessary this year to send me away. But I feel quite set up with your *renseignements*,' he added, putting back his book into his pocket, 'and I certainly shall think of it for another year.'

Frances had been so singled out for the purpose of giving the young invalid information, that she found herself a little apart from the party when he went away. They were all ladies, and all intimates, and the unaccustomed girl was not prepared for the onslaught of this curious and eager, though so pretty and fashionable mob. 'What are those *renseignements* you have been giving him? Is he going off after Con? Has he been questioning you about Con? We are all dying to know. And what do you think she will say to him if he goes out after her?' cried all, speaking together, those soft eager voices, to which Frances did not know how to reply.

ARSENIC-EATERS.

IN 1875, at the forty-eighth annual meeting of the German Society of Naturalists and Physicians, which was held at Gratz, Dr Knapp, practising in Styria, introduced two male arsenic-eaters to the assembly. One of these men consumed in their presence above six grains of white arsenic—that is, enough to poison three men—without suffering the slightest inconvenience; and it was stated that he had been accustomed to this sort of thing for years. He was by calling an ox-herd, and after the custom of his countrymen, had administered to the cattle under his charge a daily dose of arsenic, for the purpose of rendering their hair glossy and of otherwise improving their appearance. He had been so far successful that he was led to argue that what was good for the oxen was good for himself; and that he was to a certain extent justified in his conclusions was proved by the fact of his being in the enjoyment of robust health. Dr Knapp's other subject partook of rather more than four grains of the yellow arsenic—that is, of orpiment—and he, too, had done the same with impunity for years. This man stated, that having to enter a house in which fifteen persons had died of typhus fever, he prepared himself for the attempt by taking a dose of less than half a grain of orpiment. This caused some disagreeable results; but the unpleasantness having worn off, he repeated the dose, entered the house without contracting the disease, and was so pleased with the success of his experiment, that he had continued to take arsenic ever afterwards. He, too, was in the enjoyment of robust health.

We believe that it was Mr Heisch, a teacher of chemistry at the Middlesex Hospital, who first brought the subject of arsenic-eating prominently before the notice of the profession in this country. This was some time about the year 1822; but since then, the fact has again and again been demonstrated by the researches of medical men and of travellers, so that now there are few persons who would venture to

express any doubt on the question. Indeed, it has long been acknowledged by the best authorities that arsenic-eating is extensively practised in the south-west corner of Austria—that is, in Upper and Middle Styria—especially in the districts of Hartberg, Lamprecht, Leoben, and Oberzeirung—also in Carinthia, Salzburg, the Tyrol, Lower Austria, and the Erzgebirge. It is to a certain extent acknowledged that these people attain a green old age; and it is even suggested that in some sort they owe their longevity to the baneful practice, though there is room for the gravest doubts on this score. When arsenic-eating was first brought before the notice of the world, it was treated as a gross imposture would be; and the stories about it were classed with those of Welsh fasting-girls and universal remedies; indeed, the profession confidently asserted that these Styrian peasants partook of nothing more unwholesome than a piece of chalk, for it was deemed utterly impossible that a man could, unscathed, consume enough poison to affect a dozen people, and certainly enough to kill three.

Fact, however, is stranger than fiction, and a fact so strange as this could not lie unnoticed in the region of myths. In 1851, Tschudi brought the matter again prominently forward; and since that time, it has been so clearly demonstrated, with all the requirements of scientific research, that it would be absurd to deny it to be a sober reality. But all the world takes poison in some form or other every day—ether, alcohol, opium, hashish, nicotine, essences, and so on, and that without calling forth any particular expression of wonder. It is so common a habit, that with some people this taking of poisons has become a condition of existence. Medical men, too, derive some of their best remedies from poisons, and are as a rule well justified by results. But while one man may take his daily dose of some narcotic, and another his of medicinal poison, a third man, unfortunately, is only able to still the cravings of his appetite by swallowing a substance which has probably cost more lives than any other drug, whatever it may be—namely, arsenic.

The arsenic-eater may, it is true, be fortifying himself against the machinations of a secret poisoner; and he may be—indeed, after many years' use of it, he very likely is—administering a dose of something absolutely necessary to his existence; thus giving some sort of colour to the claim of the Styrian that it lengthens life. At the best, however, it is a playing with danger, a tempting of Providence most reprehensible; and it is a habit so degrading, that it makes us feel sorry for human nature. It is, however, well known among medical men that arsenic taken internally is useful in many diseases, more especially such as affect the skin; and under the form known as Fowler's Solution, it is often enough prescribed in small doses. The veterinary surgeon administers it to horses and cattle; while in some instances, in a somewhat

rough-and-ready way, it is given by stablemen and herdsmen in many parts of Europe, especially in Austria, to the animals under their care. Nor can the stablemen of this country be said to be entirely innocent of this charge; for it is a well established fact that this drug improves the appearance of the skin and hair, making it sleek and glossy, besides rendering the animal plump and strengthening its breathing organs. What wonder, then, that such men finding, as we have already said, these results, begin to argue that what is good for an ox or a horse is, in smaller quantities, good for a man. They actually do so argue; and to the daily use of arsenic they attribute several good results, such as clearness of complexion, and increased powers of digestion as shown by solidity of flesh; they say it strengthens their respiratory organs and enables them, laden with heavy burdens, to climb mountains without fatigue; and some even declare it increases their courage—which may be true, if the aforesaid good results follow its use, for courage is often only an effect of conscious strength, as timidity is of conscious weakness.

It must not, however, be supposed that any one takes to *Hedri* or arsenic-eating quite openly. On the contrary, it is generally begun in secret and at the increase of the moon—and in some villages with superstitious observances. A very small dose is at first taken once a week—bread and butter is the favourite medium—then twice a week, and so on, until, when the individual arrives at a dose daily, the dose itself is increased till as much may be taken as in ordinary circumstances would kill two or three individuals. But it must not be understood that those people can consume the drug altogether with impunity. When they first begin with their very small doses, they are seized with nausea and burning pains in the mouth, throat, and stomach, and are probably very much more uncomfortable than a boy who has taken his first cigar. But one peculiarity of arsenic-eating is this, that when a man has once begun to indulge in it, he must continue to indulge; for if he ceases, the arsenic in his system poisons him; or, as it is popularly expressed, the last dose kills him. Indeed, the arsenic-eater must not only continue his indulgence, he must also increase the quantity of the drug, so that it is extremely difficult to stop the habit; for, as sudden cessation causes death, the gradual cessation produces such a terrible heart-gnawing, that it may probably be said that no genuine arsenic-eater ever ceased to eat arsenic while life lasted.

It is curious that while, on the one hand, the human organism is so remarkably sensitive to arsenic, a man may, on the other hand, indulge in these poisonous doses for years. This is probably owing to the fact that arsenic acts on the skin, and thus is being constantly carried out of the system; and also because it is readily eliminated by the kidneys. Now, this prevents any accumulation going on in the tissues, and thus, what might seem almost mythical, is at least brought within the range of possibility. It has been calculated that this process of elimination has to be carried on for fourteen days before a given dose is entirely removed. But yet the fact remains that these Austrian peasants can swallow arsenic to an extent and with an

impunity unprecedented in the annals of toxicology. For the solution of the problem, we may offer the following considerations. First of all, the human organism may become accustomed to most if not all poisons, if they are administered at first in exceedingly small doses; and in this way a poison, as is well known, may become a 'mithridate' to itself. Secondly, though the human organism is extremely sensitive to arsenic, yet some constitutions may be less so than others; thus, for instance, the arsenic-eaters of Styria are all of them robust mountaineers, whose forefathers have eaten arsenic from generation to generation, so that, as may be supposed, each generation has become more arsenic-proof than the one before it. Thirdly, like most mountaineers, the Styrians consume large quantities of milk and butter, as well as other food rich in fats, when the oily matters to a certain extent unite with the arsenic, forming an arsenical soap, which does not so readily enter into the blood, so that the total amount of arsenic actually assimilated is proportionally small. From this we see that if the Styrian partakes of an unusual amount of this deadly drug, he is at the same time not only less susceptible to its influence by his hereditary descent and his habits, but his food supplies him with some sort of an antidote.

One other fact may be noticed in connection with arsenical poisoning—namely, that the preliminary symptoms of accidental poisoning have often resulted from the apparently insignificant cause of the use of the flimsy, bright-green tarlatan ball-dresses so much in vogue a few years back, as also from sleeping in rooms papered with hangings containing the beautifully brilliant colour known as Scheele's green. The dangerous activity of the very minute quantities of arsenic which under such circumstances enter the system may probably be explained by the fact that the poison in all such cases acts directly through the lungs, and not through the stomach, where it would be subjected to the modifying influences already mentioned.

These last points bring us to the treatment of a person suffering from arsenical poisoning. This poison is so frequently the cause of death both by accident and design, that it is important that every one should know the proper remedies to be used in such circumstances. Until a medical man arrives, the vomiting which generally occurs when an overdose of arsenic is swallowed, should be freely encouraged, followed by demulcent drinks, switched eggs, cream, oil, or better still, a mixture of equal parts of oil and lime-water. In recent years, a more strictly chemical antidote than any of the foregoing has been employed with very great success—namely, hydrated peroxide of iron. This antidote, it cannot be too well known, may be extemporised in a very efficient manner by adding ordinary carbonate of soda to tincture of iron—better known as steel drops—of pharmacy. A tablespoonful of soda may be added to each fluid ounce of the tincture with water, and as this mixture has no injurious effect on the system, it may be administered as largely and as quickly as possible.

The whole subject is of great interest; for it seems passing strange that the delicate framework

of our bodies, which may be annihilated with two grains of a white powder, may be so far changed as to require, nay, even to crave for a daily heavy dose of this very same poison.

WALTER DREW.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

'I WILL take my letters now, Marjory,' said my father, the Rev. Henry Charlton, laying down his knife and fork and settling himself back in his chair with a sigh.

My Aunt Marjory, who had long occupied my poor mother's place at the head of our household, insisted that her brother should never begin the perusal of his correspondence until he had breakfasted, averring that to do so was to rob him of his appetite. There was a strong spice of truth in the bitter statement; for such letters as he received were seldom of an inspiring character, the contents consisting in the main of charitable appeals, parish business, or, worse still, of that class of 'reminders' which make a sensitive and honourable man, who has heavy pecuniary liabilities, dread the arrival of every mail.

I recall that particular morning vividly. The sunshine streamed through the half-opened windows, and the shadows from the trees on the lawn fell tremulously upon the curtains and athwart the floor. My aunt's fox-terriers, Tom and Gip, lay coiled up on the hearth, now and then blinking and moving their stumps of tails in a half-hearted way whenever a chair was stirred. My father sipped his last cup of coffee at intervals as he opened and read one after another of the pile of many-shaped and various-coloured letters. I watched the careworn, venerable face with unusual interest. It was the last breakfast I was to partake of at Brierleigh Rectory for some time; and my heart yearned with exceptional fervour towards the gentle, simple-hearted being, whose hand trembled visibly every time he took up a fresh envelope. I was going to visit London, in the hope of getting into practice as a doctor; and I inwardly recorded a vow that all the energy I possessed should be dedicated to the task of redeeming his long-lost peace of mind, by placing him beyond those pecuniary anxieties which had pressed upon him ever since I could remember. While these things shaped themselves in my mind, I was startled by a joyous exclamation from my father.

'Who would have thought it?' he cried. 'How good of the dear old fellow!' And he pushed his spectacles on to his brows, as he rose and walked to the fireplace.

'Who is your correspondent, Henry?' asked my aunt.

'Ay, to be sure, who is he?' said my father, rubbing his hands and smiling.

'Come, Henry dear, let us share your good news,' said Aunt Marjory, stealing softly from her place to my father's side. She was a small-framed, active little woman, some fifty years of age, with bright, intelligent, affectionate-looking brown eyes.

'Who is he?' said my father, as if in answer to her first query. 'Why, my old friend,

Charlie Stanton. Best bat and best goal-keeper at Rugby; second wrangler at Cambridge, *facile princeps* in everything. But—bless me!—he must be my own age. Ah! time slips by.

My aunt had by this time gently taken possession of the letter, and with a significant smile, to which my father responded in the affirmative, she proceeded to read it aloud. Its contents bear so directly on the events I have to record, that I make no apology for giving the text in full.

MY DEAR CHARLTON.—You will no doubt glance first at the signature of this letter to help your memory; but even then, I fear you will have to think more than once before you can recall your old school fag and fellow-student, Charlie Stanton. Thirty years have come and gone since we parted; and all we know of each other's history during that period is what you or I may have gleaned from the newspapers or the world's gossip regarding our several destinies.

I have been placed on the shelf at my own request with the rank of colonel; and now I mean to devote myself to the task of seeing my only child Alice settled in life. I have bought a small estate in Warwickshire, Elmdrove Manor, so that you and I will soon be near neighbours; but meantime, as this is my daughter's first season, I must retain my London establishment a little longer. Although I can't come to you at present, therefore, you, my dear Charlton, may be able to look us up in London. I confess I am extremely anxious to see you, for the sake of our old friendship, as well as for other reasons which I cannot very well make clear to you by letter. Your son, too, shares largely in my interest, on account of the high terms in which I hear him spoken of; and I trust that if your official duties prevent your visiting us personally, you will at least make your boy your deputy at an early date.

I am unhappily a widower, as I regret to learn you are also. My brother Sydney—you remember him, of course—died some two years ago, so that I have scarcely a near relative living. There is, however, a nephew of my late wife in whom I take a strong interest; a clever, harebrained, good-hearted, irreclaimable scapegrace, I fear. You, I have no doubt, would take kindly to him, for he is an artist of considerable ability, and might, I am told, have a great career, did but his industry keep pace with his talent.

In concluding, I beg to remind you of my unalterable determination to keep henceforth in touch with you both by letter and in the flesh. Let me hear from you, therefore, my dear fellow, at once, and tell me on what date I may order rooms for you at Grosvenor Square, where you and your son shall have a hearty welcome from—Yours faithfully,

CHARLES STANTON.

The faces of my father and Aunt Marjory as the latter finished reading the colonel's letter, formed a study for the poet if not the painter, so full were they, as their eyes met, of reciprocal gratulation and sympathetic delight.

'It is so like old Charlie to write so warmly,' said my father. 'Ah, how delightful it will

be to talk over old times, when he comes to Elmdrove. Strange that I should never have thought of him, when I heard that a Colonel Stanton was to be our new neighbour.'

'And then,' said Aunt Marjory thinking kindly of me, 'it will be such a valuable introduction for John. Why, with Colonel Stanton's friendly recommendation, he might soon have a large and fashionable practice.'

'Yes, to be sure,' answered my father in a voice from dreamland.

'Is Colonel Stanton a very rich man, Henry?'

asked my aunt, as she stooped to fondle Tom and Gip alternately.

'Rich? O yes; certainly. His was a wealthy family; and as Charles says, Stanton *primus* died some years ago—a banker and a bachelor, I have heard, and Charles was his heir.'

'His daughter will be a great heiress, then,' said his sister, looking at me suddenly with a merry, meaning glance. 'I wonder what sort of a creature this nephew is?' she added immediately, with something like a sigh.

'Nephew? O yes; the artist.—But that reminds me, Marjory, I must go and finish that Madonna.'

My father stepped into the hall, took his Panama hat from its peg, and went out across the lawn with a brisk step, humming cheerfully some long-forgotten air. His studio, towards which he now bent his steps, was a tiny palace of glass, standing under the southern garden wall, curtained within, ventilated by sliding panes, and warmed in winter by a small American stove of graceful design. A stranger would have mistaken it, by its outer aspect, for a conservatory or for a photographer's den. It was, however, the home-within-home of its owner; the spot in which beloved labour chased away care; it was there he spent every hour not dedicated to his clerical duties; and in which he worked with a diligence prompted, alas! by necessity as much as by artistic zeal. Yes, it was there he worked out, patiently and uncomplainingly, the penance of his infatuated friendship for one who had long since 'gone before.' He was heart and soul an artist, but one only of that vast crowd so designated whose powers of flight fall short of their heaven-directed aspirations. He worked for the picture-dealers.

My Aunt Marjory now invited me to keep her company in one of her favourite garden retreats, under a magnificent red-flowered hawthorn, then in full blossom. There was a springiness in her step, a gaiety of expression about her movements, and a vivacity in the soft voice, that told of the gladness which the matutinal ordeal of letter-reading had for once brought with it.

'I consider it very opportune, John—very fortunate indeed, this letter from Colonel Stanton. You are going to London to seek out a suitable practice. No doubt, money will enable you to do that; or, on the other hand, it will give you time to create one for yourself; but in either case, the patronage of one in Colonel Stanton's position will be of great advantage. I would not wish you to accept any other kind of consideration from him; nor is it necessary, as you know. My lawyer has full instructions to pay on your behalf to the extent of half my little fortune for the

objects we have in view; and I know, dear, you will use it wisely and well, and be a credit to your old aunty.' After a pause: 'By the way, John, have you quite forgotten that romantic nonsense about the "fair unknown?"'

As Aunt Marjory popped this query suddenly at me, she burst into a cheery laugh, her brown eyes dancing with merriment the while. I felt my cheeks tingling as I tried to join in the laugh, the attempt, however, being a miserable failure. I stammered some incoherent answer; but my mind was filled with the image she had invoked—that of the charming girl whom it was my good fortune to restore to life after she had been taken from the water senseless and pulseless. I had imprudently mentioned the incident to my aunt shortly after its occurrence, and in such terms, I suspect, as to excite her curiosity beyond its usual bounds. At anyrate, she made it the text for a good deal of good-natured but very unwelcome banter. I was uncommonly sensitive, and especially vulnerable to ridicule on that very tender subject.

'There, John; don't be vexed with aunty; I shan't tease you any more. But I want you to be a sensible fellow, and fall in love with Miss Stanton.'

'Why, aunt, that's a more sorry jest than the—the other,' I said, smiling. 'A sensible fellow indeed I should be to fall in love with a great heiress whom I have never seen.'

'Well, I don't see where the jest comes in,' replied Aunt Marjory demurely. 'You do know her name, at anyrate, and who and what she is, and may see her any day you choose after to-day. And as to her being a great heiress, why, are you not to be a great physician?'

My aunt was too shrewd and practical not to be conscious of the ludicrousness of her argument, and consequently joined me in a hearty laugh at her own expense. The subject dropped when we had ceased laughing, and the rest of our conversation was occupied with the discussion of my father's affairs. To make these intelligible, I must furnish the reader with the main facts of a strange history.

My father had taken holy orders while at Cambridge, in accordance with the expressed wishes of my grandfather, a retired lawyer, in affluent circumstances. But while doing no violence to his own feelings or opinions in consenting to this step, my father entertained an ambition of an altogether different kind, which he feared would interfere with the discharge of his duties as a placed clergyman. He had the tastes and aspirations of the true artist, and had devoted the freshest of his hopes and energies in the race for distinction as a painter. He declined to accept a curacy, and for several years after leaving college, continued his artistic studies under the best masters both at home and abroad. On his return home, he was successful in getting a few of his pieces exhibited; the favourable opinions of friendly critics still further concealed the truth from him for a time. But the revelation dawned upon him slowly and painfully, that he had overrated his natural gifts; that he possessed talent, not genius; that, with considerable skill as a draftsman and colourist, he lacked breadth of imagination—the creative faculty; and that, in a word, he had, like

thousands of others, mistaken his mission in life. It was while in the condition of despondency engendered by such reflections that he was induced, at the urgent desire of his parents, to accept the curacy of the country parish in which they resided.

From an object of ambition, then, painting gradually became to him merely a graceful pastime. His new duties soon acquired a strong interest for him, while art remained the solace of his leisure. He spent his holidays in wanderings with his sketch-book throughout Wales, Scotland, or the Lake Country, in quest of fresh health and fresh scenes for artistic contemplation. It was during one of these summer tours in the Highlands that he formed an acquaintance with a young man of remarkable abilities, who had already earned fame as a painter in water-colours. The simple-hearted, enthusiastic curate soon came to regard this man with an esteem partaking of veneration, and was so enchanted with his society and conversation as to express a wish to continue his journey in his company. Walter Drew—the young man was so named—gave a cheerful assent; and the strangely assorted pair resumed their progress together. Drew was a scholar and a gentleman, had travelled much, was well versed both in classical and modern literature—a poet and musician as well as a painter; and when it is added that these versatile accomplishments sat lightly and unaffectedly upon a man of handsome exterior and frank and agreeable manners, small surprise need be expressed that my trusting, ardent, unsophisticated father came early to regard him as a modern Crichton. A strong friendship sprang from this casual introduction, and Drew accompanied my father into —shire, where he was received with open arms by my grandparents, and spent a month at their home.

Time went on. Drew's fame as a painter in oils became the theme of every tongue. Far from feeling jealous, my father appears to have translated his own aspirations after renown into an absorbing interest in the rising glories of his friend's career. My father had been some three years curate of —, when both his parents died within a short period of one another, leaving my father the bulk of their fortune, with a sum of five thousand pounds to my Aunt Marjory. The following year, my father married the rector's daughter, a delicate, amiable, and lovely but penniless bride. The first five years after their union were passed in all the happiness which competence, simple habits, charitable actions, mutual marital affection, and graceful tastes could scarcely fail to yield. Three children were born during that period, of whom I was the youngest, the two elder being girls, who inherited their mother's beauty along with her delicacy of constitution. With such tranquil surroundings, my father's dreaminess increased, his simplicity and unbounded faith in his kind became confirmed, and his child-like nature became immovably his special characteristic.

What had been the fortunes of Walter Drew during these years? His genius, I have said, placed him early in the possession of a name—one neither capriciously awarded nor unlikely to stand the test of time. But his glorious powers appeared to be satisfied with

their own display. He had assured himself and the public of his transcendent capabilities in the realm of art, just as he had previously done at school and college in every arena of intellectual gladiatorship; and now, as then, he rested supinely with the laurels in his hand, disdaining to place them on his brows. He revelled in the exhibition of his versatility, preferring to create wonder by the variety of his powers, to directing any one of them towards a definite and useful end. He had vast energy, with scant continuity of will.

Accepting as his right the reputation of a fashionable artist, Drew now conceived the new ambition of shining as a man of fashion. His connection by birth with several good families, his splendid physique, the subtle charm of his presence and address, rendered the task an easy one. He soon had the *entrée* to the houses of the leaders of rank and fashion; and, to hasten the remarkable tale, in less than a year led an earl's youngest daughter to the altar. During the succeeding two years, Drew and Lady Cecilia became themselves the leaders of a certain section of the 'world,' but at such a pace of ill-regulated expenditure, that in little over two years, in spite of repeated assistance and the intervention of friends, the record of their folly was duly published; and a retreat to the continent became imperative. Lady Cecilia died soon after in giving birth to a son; and Drew, thus cut off from the sphere of fashionable display, philosophically resumed his palette and brush.

During these years, my father had seen little of Drew, and had heard but seldom from him. The year after his wife's death, however, that irrepressible once more arrested the attention of the world by the exhibition of two pictures, which, with uncommon unanimity, the critics pronounced to be master-pieces. My father hastened to London—saw, and worshipped. He met Drew, whose *déjà-vu* appearance had more of the traditional artist than he had ever before affected; was charmed with the cordiality of the great man's reception of him, and spent much time in his society. Upon my father's return to the country, he carried Drew's autograph in his pocket-book, for the possession of which he had parted temporarily with two thousand pounds. Soon after this, and according to arrangement, my father and his erratic friend made a tour together through Worcester and Gloucestershires. The artist was a companion to whom the most fastidious could not object, his conduct and conversation being those of a gentleman and man of culture. A disdain of the world's applause was indeed sometimes traceable in his manner and remarks; but the impression made on my father's mind by this indifference to what men usually long for, was such as rather to enhance his respect for his fellow-traveller. I find many circumstances noted in Mr Charlton's diary at this period which go far to redeem Drew's name from the charge of original or premeditated heartlessness, even discounting them at the high rate demanded by my father's utter want of knowledge of the world. He was both good-hearted and open-handed, and capable, as many incidents showed, both of self-sacrifice and magnanimity. But the sequel

proved that the unhappy man's moral fibre was scarcely strong enough for the strain to which his insatiable desire to dazzle exposed it.

For Drew had still another and as yet unbent string to his bow. He did not at once give up his studio or his painting; but he now sought more and more constantly the society of men on 'Change—merchants, brokers, and Company promoters, and appeared less and less in the coteries of art. His new associates soon recognised his consummate capacity as a financier; and Drew's name began to figure on the directorate of first one and then another Company of the very best repute. He then commenced to finesse with stocks and shares—his caution at first being equal to his judgment, with the result of giving him once more the command of considerable sums of money; with these he continued to speculate, till in a few years he had repaid my father, set up once more a handsome establishment, and kept his carriage and riding-horses. Everything he put his hand to seemed to flourish; and it is evidence of his ability as well as of honesty of purpose, that every one of the Companies he was personally instrumental in floating has proved a commercial success. His hand, however, was getting weary holding this cumbrous mercantile plough. He sought to amass wealth speedily, and then seek 'fresh woods and pastures new' for the exercise of his genius. In short, he began to plunge, now successfully, now disastrously. His transactions demanded frequent accommodation, which he at first obtained readily, then with difficulty, at last—on no consideration. What representations he made to my father to obtain possession piecemeal of his entire fortune, I know not, but I do know that it was swallowed up in the desperate attempts Drew made to break his fall by Stock Exchange gambling. The crash came at last, and this gifted but infatuated man disappeared for ever from English society, to die poor and alone in a humble lodging at Rome.

My father was a ruined man. He had not only lost every shilling of his money, but stood, at the time of Drew's flight, responsible for bills to the extent of several thousand pounds. His friends advised him to seek immunity through the courts; but he stolidly declined. The presentation to the living of Brierleigh came opportunely. My father then entered into an arrangement to pay interest on the debt with a portion of his revenue, and to reduce the capital as circumstances would allow, meantime undertaking to maintain policies of assurance to cover the amount, in the event of his death. He refused my Aunt Marjory's generous offer to place the whole of her own money at his disposal to relieve himself of the terrible incubus. 'It was a debt of honour and friendship,' was his only formula to every protest. And for over twenty years, that little studio under the southern garden wall was the scene of a sustained and heroic, if quixotic, struggle to acquit the memory of his unstable friend, regarding whom to the end he spoke only with sorrowful pity and regretful admiration.

My mother's health, I have said, was never robust; she gradually declined, and left myself and sisters orphans before I had reached my

tenth year. My sisters both died in their teens. And Aunt Marjory, who had taken my mother's place, devoted her entire income to educating me for the profession of my choice.

FEEDING THE FISHES.

A NEW-JERSEY EPISODE.

DEEP in the heart of the New Jersey pine-forest lies a lake, some two hundred acres in extent, whose clear bosom, tinged, by the cedar swamps through which its tributary streams flow, to a rich amber colour, reflects with the faithfulness of a mirror every shade of the luxuriant autumn colouring of the sumach, gum, maple, and dwarf-oak which fringe its banks. On its north shore is the only break in the broad belt of forest by which the lake is surrounded, and here a trim little frame-cottage peeps out over the water from amid a cluster of Virginia creepers, climbing roses, and magnolias. The garden which surrounds it forms a quaint combination of the useful with the beautiful, shade-trees, shrubs, and flowering plants being intermingled with wide-spreading grape-arbours loaded with luxuriant bunches of Concord and Delawares, apple and pear trees whose branches bend beneath their load of ripe fruit, and water-melon vines, whose luscious green-coated produce looks all the more inviting for the close proximity of a stream of clear ice-cold water, in which one or two monster melons are already immersed, waiting for dinner-time.

A quarter of a mile away, the railroad threads its way through the pinewoods, and a little wooden hut by the track serves as 'depôt' for the rare arrivals of passengers or freight. Here my friend X., the owner of the cottage, met me one steaming day in the autumn of last year; and as we strolled through the woods on our way to his bachelor quarters, I had reason to congratulate myself on the change from the hot dusty city, and on the invitation he had already given me to repeat my visit a month later, when the 'close-time' for quail was over, and the little brown bunches which took flight almost from under our feet should be fair game for the gun.

'At present,' said X., 'I have nothing to offer you in the way of sport better than an evening among the pike; but the water is in good condition, and I think you will agree with me that they are not to be despised.'

We had just reached the edge of the lake as he spoke; and looking out over the picturesque little sheet of water, I felt that he must be difficult to please who could not be content to spend an afternoon among its ripples, with pipe and chat to while away the hours, and rod in hand to give a show of occupation to his idleness.

'I have ordered dinner at one, so as to secure a long afternoon. That gives us a spare hour now; so we will have a cigar, and then I'll show you one of my hobbies,' said X. presently.

We then sauntered to a part of the shore where, in a little recess, stood the boathouse,

with a pretty snuggerly above it, used in summer as a smoking and writing room. By the side of the boathouse, a small landing-stage reached some thirty feet into the water; and from its further end a platform of wood, supported on planks driven endwise into the sandy bottom, ran at right angles to the stage, meeting a projecting point of the bank, and so cutting off a tiny bay, and making an inclosed basin about forty feet by thirty in extent. The planks which supported both landing-stage and platform were placed sufficiently close to one another to prevent the passage of a fish between them, while allowing the water to circulate freely.

'There,' said my friend, 'you see one of my pet "diversions."' Like Chaucer's Frankeleyn, I like my fish both fresh and plump, and for that purpose keep "many a pike and many a luce in stewe."

I looked down into the water of the basin, and perceived his meaning. Closely huddled together beneath the shade of the platform were two dark wriggling crowds of fish, which on closer inspection revealed themselves as pike and catfish respectively; the former lean and hungry-looking as compared with their plump round-headed companions, but withal of comely proportions, and giving promise of development should time and circumstances permit.

'Your pike run small,' I said. 'Are those of average size for this lake?'

'About the average,' X. replied, 'when left to themselves. Those you are looking at are a recent catch, and have not yet had time to fatten. But look yonder;' and he pointed to the roots of a cypress which had been left standing in the middle of the basin.

I followed the direction of his finger; and there, patient, silent, and grim as fate, lay three veritable monsters, whose evil eyes and savage protruding jaws sufficiently explained the huddling together and the respectful distance of the smaller fry. Here and there, paddling awkwardly about in search of food, or lifting their comical little heads above the surface for a breath of air, were half-a-dozen fresh-water terrapin, a kind of small turtle, destined, like their finny comrades, to grace my friend's table after a due season of confinement and good living.

'It is about fish-feeding time,' said X. 'If you care to see the process, take a seat on that log, while I get their dinner. I always see to it myself,' he added; 'and I believe my protégés get to know me after a time.' So saying, he turned to the house, and presently reappeared with a large piece of fresh meat, a knife, and a long bamboo fishing-pole, from the end of which dangled eight or ten feet of fine twine. Cutting the meat into narrow strips four or five inches long, he proceeded to attach one of them by a running noose to the end of the string. The fish seemed to be watching this process from their shady retreat, and one or two of the bolder spirits had left their corners and gradually approached the side of the basin at which my friend stood. He advanced a step nearer, and holding out the pole at arm's-length, waved the tempting morsel two or three times across the inclosure, a few inches above the water. This had the effect of bringing more of the pike from their retreat; and it was interesting to notice

how they would move into position by almost imperceptible degrees, and then lie motionless beneath the surface, eyeing the swinging meat, but apparently unconcerned about its ultimate destination. Some few of the new-comers still remained, shy or sulky, under the shadow, merely turning their bodies so as to keep an eye upon the actions of their more adventurous companions.

Suddenly lowering his hand, X. allowed the piece of meat to touch the surface, and drew it sharply across the basin. In an instant the assumed unconcern vanished, and with a fierce dash, half-a-dozen pike made for the meat, one of which, outstripping his rivals, snatched it cross-wise between his jaws, and with a flick of his tail jerked it from the noose, and retired to the further end of the basin to gorge his prize. Then another strip was substituted, and the process repeated with a similar result. One after another, even the most timid fish were lured to dinner, and a lively scramble ensued as each piece of meat touched the water. Now and then, the noose failed to hold, and the morsel sank to the bottom before it could be seized. These pieces were at once secured by the catfish, which lurked round for such windfalls; and a grand mêlée followed, all the other catfish and the turtles joining in pursuit, and not unfrequently wrestling part, if not the whole, from its original captor. I was surprised to see that the pike took no part in these tussles, and asked my friend for an explanation.

'Pike are dainty feeders,' he replied, 'and will touch nothing that they believe to be dead; so I am obliged to resort to my rod-and-line tactics to humour them. The catfish are less particular; any kind of garbage suits their taste; but fortunately, there is nothing of the sewage order in the lake, and when clean fed, they are as delicate eaters as any fish that swim.'

The feeding process continued till the pike seemed satisfied and relaxed their efforts. Then, gathering up the fragments, my friend threw them in here and there for the catfish and turtles. All this while the monsters under the cypress-tree had maintained their attitude of proud indifference, not betraying by so much as the quiver of a fin the smallest interest in all that was going on around them.

'How about your big fish?' I asked. 'Have you any sleight-of-hand in store for them?'

'Ah, those fellows dine later,' replied X., with grim meaning; 'as some of these gluttonous young ones will find to their cost before evening.'

'And don't they trouble the catfish?'

'Certainly not. Nature has provided against that by furnishing the catfish with the most prickly and indigestible headgear any fish could desire. No pike ever tackles them a second time, if indeed hereditary tradition does not warn him against a first attempt.—But look here a moment. Have you ever seen a snapper before?'

He directed my attention to a small deep tank, dug out close by the side of the pond, and lined with boards, in which I saw a large turtle, and two or three little fellows hardly bigger than turkeys' eggs.

'How do they differ from the terrapin?' I asked.

For answer, my host picked up a short stout stick, and thrust it into the water a few inches in front of the large turtle's nose. Quick as lightning his jaws closed upon the stick; and X. hoisted him right out of the tank and held him out at arm's-length. He shook the stick; but the 'snapper' still held on; nor did he relax his jaws till he found himself once more in his native element.

'You may cut their heads off when they have once taken hold, and the jaws will remain as firmly closed as ever,' said X. 'I saw a lady last summer who walked from the river to the bathhouse, a distance of fifty yards, with a small snapper hanging on to the skirt of her bathing-dress, and they had to prise his teeth open with a knife to set her free. Those little fellows are a mystery to me,' he added. 'I have had them in there for four months now, feeding them regularly, and they don't seem to have grown an atom.—But hark! there's the dinner-bell; and in the afternoon we'll see if we can't add a few specimens to my aquarium.'

OUR MYSTERIOUS RECRUIT.

'BUGLER, sound "orderly sergeants,"' cried the sergeant-major, popping his head out of the door of the orderly-room.

The small boy who was officiating in this capacity on the guard, hurriedly left a group of juvenile comrades off duty, whom he had been wistfully watching while engaged at an exciting game of marbles, and promptly made the barracks resound with the 'call.'

Thus summoned, the orderly sergeants soon made their appearance, and proceeded to the orderly-room, which the colonel in command, accompanied by the adjutant, had just entered. Something was on hand, apparently of importance, as a mounted orderly, bearing a despatch for the commanding officer, had arrived from the brigade office a few minutes before. This news spread with rapidity over the barracks. The canteen, library, and barrack-rooms were speedily deserted by their occupants, the men swarming into the barrack square. In a few minutes the sergeants emerged from the orderly-room and hurried off in the direction of the quarters of their respective companies.

'What's up, sergeant?' we shouted eagerly to a corpulent knight of the chevrons who was puffing past with an expression of extreme importance depicted on his face.

'The route's in,' was the sergeant's laconic reply.

'Where to?' we asked.

'Ireland, in a week.'

'Oh, bother it!' I cried; while my comrades indulged in much stronger language; and soon loud expressions of disapprobation were heard over the barracks.

The time of which I write was in the end of 1867, and the Fenian agitation in Ireland had broken out afresh, after a rather delusive lull of a month or two. The men of the gallant —th, to which I belonged, had good reason to grumble at the prospective change of locality, as the regiment had returned from India only nine months before, after sojourning in that

country for nearly eleven years, having been despatched thither from the Crimea at the termination of the war. We had looked forward to having a pleasant time of it in the quiet town in the south of England in which we had been quartered since our return from the East; therefore, the order to proceed to Ireland was specially unwelcome. Perhaps there is nothing more distasteful to the men of the British army than to be stationed in the sister isle during any troublous period. The hardships arising from heavy marches and exposure to the elements are in some cases almost as bad as those of a campaign. The work, too, has its perils, without, of course, any of the inspiring feelings that are engendered while engaged in real warfare, not to speak of the subsequent glory attached to success.

Although personally I should have preferred to remain in England, I soon made up my mind to face the inevitable; besides, I thought a little excitement infinitely better than the insufferable routine of a garrison town. Rough work was nothing new to me, as I had served with the regiment in the Crimea and during the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, and subsequently in one of the frontier expeditions.

After the usual bustle and topsy-turvy confusion, we were ready to march at the time appointed. Embarking in a troop-ship, we set sail, and after a smart run, landed at Cork, in which city we were located for about a month. Shortly after our arrival, a batch of recruits joined the regiment from the dépôt at St George's Barracks, London. Most of them were of the ordinary ragamuffin type, for the embryo Tommy Atkins, whether of urban or rural extraction, commonly presents, when he joins, a rather dilapidated spectacle. They comprised stolid yokels from the agricultural districts attired in smock-frocks; ragged sharp-featured Londoners, quick-witted, and possessed of a copious vocabulary of strange oaths; low-looking roughs from the provincial towns; a few clerks out at elbows; and one or two respectfully dressed young men, who had probably enlisted in a spirit of adventure. One member of this recent addition to the strength of the regiment, by name Coghlan, was distinctly, in point of appearance and manner, a long way above the average type of recruits. Tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular, he had pleasing features and a most polite manner. He was a native of Ireland, as was shown by his slight brogue. He was posted to my company; and I was detailed by the colour-sergeant to show him how to clean his traps, make his bed, and perform other duties connected with the barrack-room.

I speedily found that my duty was a sinecure, as Coghlan did not require much tuition; on the contrary, he took to his work as if 'to the manner born,' and displayed such an aptitude in learning his drill, as to point to the suspicion that he had worn the cloth before, that, in fact, he had deserted from another regiment. He was a very civil and obliging young fellow, always ready unsolicited to assist any comrade; but there was one thing about him which puzzled us all—he never alluded in the slightest degree to his antecedents, unlike the ordinary Tommy Atkins, who, when the recollections of the

ragged toggerly in which he joins the army have somewhat subsided, turns out, by his own showing, to have been in civil life a rather important member of the community.

Coghlan was frequently 'chaffed' by his comrades, who, suspecting that he was a deserter, made frequent inquiries about his last 'regimental number;' but he merely smiled in reply to any such observations.

One morning we suddenly received orders to march inland; and Coghlan had made himself so far proficient in drill that he was put in the ranks to perform the duties of a trained soldier. My company, together with other two, was sent to garrison a small town of about a thousand inhabitants. The barracks were situated on the outskirts; they were of very small size, just containing the requisite accommodation for the three companies. For a time after our arrival we observed extreme vigilance, night-sentries being posted outside all round the walls. The prevailing agitation, however, seemed to affect every district except that in which we were stationed; the townspeople were civil, though not over-cordial; and after a while our extreme precautionary measures were relaxed, and the guard reduced to nine men, under command of a sergeant.

Although, as I have said, the inhabitants of the town were anything but sociably inclined, they were not aggressive in manner to the military, and time passed without any mishap occurring that was conducive to strained relations between the garrison and the civilians. Acting on a hint from the police, however, the major in command placed several of the public-houses usually frequented by the lower orders of the population 'out of bounds'—that is, it was considered a breach of military discipline to enter them; and any soldier who infringed this regulation ran the risk of being severely punished for disobedience of orders. One of these houses was the *Irish Harp*, of which I shall have occasion to speak presently.

The senior colour-sergeant was appointed acting sergeant-major of the detachment; while our colour-sergeant, a smart, well-educated Irishman, by the name of O'Neill, was deputed to act as quarter-master-sergeant. O'Neill had charge of my room, and occupied a bunk at the end next the door. Besides Coghlan and myself, there was quartered in the room a young Irishman named Curran, who was reported to be very well connected. Before we had been many days in barracks, it was noticeable that the colour-sergeant and he appeared to be more intimate than their respective positions warranted, as they held long conferences in a low tone of voice two or three times a day. Curran received numerous letters, bearing the post-marks of different towns in England and Ireland, which he always took the first opportunity of submitting for O'Neill's inspection, after having perused them himself. Occasionally, after the receipt of one of those missives the pair seemed considerably elated—at other times seriously concerned.

One thing struck me forcibly: I felt by a species of instinct that their every movement was being closely watched by Coghlan. Quiet and unassuming in manner as he habitually was, there was a mystery about the man that I

could not fathom. O'Neill and Curran were seemingly oblivious or careless of the fact that their intimacy excited any attention. While on duty, I may mention, however, they rigidly preserved the distance prescribed by military rule regarding their respective ranks.

One night I was out in town, and suddenly discovered, with the instinct of an old soldier, that there was something wrong in my attire. I had forgotten to put on my waist-belt before going out—in fact I was, in military parlance, 'improperly dressed.' This seemingly trifling omission, from a civilian's point of view, is yet an offence for which a soldier is usually smartly punished. Perceiving the garrison picket at a distance, I naturally decided to elude the observation of the lynx-eyed sergeant in command; and turning up a dark lane by the side of the *Irish Harp* inn before alluded to, secreted myself among some carts in the back-yard. While approaching this retreat, I was surprised to see a man rush from the window of a room in the inn from which the sound of voices was proceeding, and disappear in the recesses of the yard; but, owing to the darkness, I could not distinguish what sort of character he was. Curiosity impelled me to observe for myself what was of evident interest to the man, so, stepping cautiously to the window and peeping through the aperture between the leaves of the clumsily constructed shutters, I had a good look at the interior, and saw Colour-sergeant O'Neill and Curran seated beside about a dozen civilians, seemingly belonging to different classes of the community. Some were common town roughs; while others, more respectable in appearance, looked like tradesmen and sons of neighbouring farmers. I was greatly puzzled by this spectacle in a proscribed public-house; but decided to keep my own counsel, as I had a great liking for O'Neill; so, walking away softly on tiptoe, I reached the street; but as the picket was still in sight, I hung about the entrance to the lane for a while, and looking back, saw my position at the window re-occupied by the person who had run away at my approach, whom, by the ray of light shining through the space between the closed shutters, I recognised as the recruit Coghlan!

I returned to barracks racking my brain for a solution of the strange proceedings I had witnessed, and walked past the sentry at the gate, minus my belt, without attracting his attention.

The following morning a letter bearing the Dublin postmark was received by Curran, the reading of which seemed to put him in a state of great excitement; and at once entering the bunk, he communicated to the colour-sergeant its contents, which caused O'Neill to exhibit as much agitation as the private. Coghlan was engaged at the time sweeping out the room, and approaching the bunk, seemed to bestow great pains to insure the cleanliness of the floor in its vicinity, in order, as I thought, to listen to the conversation within. A minute or two afterwards, the bugle sounded 'colour-sergeants,' and O'Neill left the room, returning, after a brief interval, with the news that a telegram had reached the commanding officer containing an intimation that the long expected consignment of the new Snider rifle

had been despatched from Dublin for the use of the garrison; and ordered me—as my name was first on the roll for duty—to form one of an escort of twenty men which was to proceed to a railway station about six miles away, to guard the wagon that was to convey the arms and ammunition to barracks. I soon got ready, and noticed, as I was about to leave the room, that Curran was writing at the table. Before going, I requested Coghlan to give me a 'brush down;' and while he was thus engaged, O'Neill approached Curran and whispered: 'To-night, after the arms are stored—not later!' Curran seemed to add this remark to his letter as a kind of postscript; and when he had finished, he handed O'Neill the note. 'Yes,' said the colour-sergeant, when he had glanced it over; 'that will do.'

Late in the afternoon, while we were slowly accompanying the wagon over the rough country-road, snow began to fall heavily, and by the time we reached barracks, it lay an inch or two deep. The arms and ammunition were safely deposited in the quarter-master's store, the door of which was locked, and O'Neill retained possession of the key. Shortly afterwards, while at dinner, I was ordered to go on guard, to supply the place of a man who had taken ill on sentry, and who had gone to hospital. Most unwillingly, I got ready, as I was tired after my day's march, and proceeded to the guardroom. Curran and Coghlan were on guard, and I found that my post was on the gate. I went on sentry at eleven, and soon afterwards, to my great annoyance, was attacked by my old enemy the toothache. Snow fell unceasingly during my turn of duty, and at one I was relieved by Curran. Brushing the snow from my greatcoat and running an oiled rag over my rifle and bayonet, I lay down on the guard-bed next to Coghlan. Sleep for me was out of the question, so I lay awake, like Iago, 'troubled with a raging tooth,' and listening to Curran's measured tramp outside.

About half an hour after I had been relieved, I fancied I heard a low whistle; and immediately afterwards the sentry, Curran, glanced in at the door. Apparently satisfied that all the occupants of the guardroom were asleep, he entered softly, the snow adhering to the soles of his boots enabling him to walk as noiselessly as if he wore list slippers. He took the key of the outer gate from the peg on which it was hung, stole out of the guardroom, and walked straight over to the solitary gas lamp opposite the door, where, reaching up with his bayonet, he turned out the light. Then I heard a 'click' as the key was turned in the lock of the gate, and several dark figures entered the barracks, the intense whiteness of the drifted snow, which had completely covered the wall opposite, making them easily perceptible from where I lay.

Curran's movements had apparently been watched by another individual besides myself; for Coghlan, shouting lustily: 'Guard, turn out!' sprang from the guard-bed, and rushing out, wrested Curran's rifle from his grasp, and going to the open gate, blew a whistle. In a second or two the barracks were entered by a party of the Royal Irish constabulary, a few of whom pursued and captured the persons whom Curran had admitted.

'This way!' shouted Coghlan, and dashed off in the direction of the quarter-master's store. About a dozen of us followed him; but when we got to the store, we found it securely locked; while the untrodden snow in its vicinity bore incontrovertible testimony to the fact that no one could recently have been there. The major in command, who had been rudely awakened from his sleep by the din and turmoil in the barracks, now approached us, and perceiving Coghlan directing our movements, cried to him: 'Aw—who are you, sir?'

'I belong to the Dublin detective department, sir!' was Coghlan's reply.

O'Neill was searched for, and was found asleep in bed, but looked terribly dismayed and astonished when Coghlan arrested him on a charge of complicity with the Fenian agitators.

By this time all the sleepers in barracks were awakened, and turned out in a strange variety of costumes to witness the upshot of this unwanted nocturnal episode.

Following O'Neill, between two of his captors, we were proceeding in the direction of the guard-room, when we came across the group of constables in charge of the men who had gained admission to the barracks in the mysterious fashion before described, and who were making most vehement protestations of innocence. To our relief and most intense amusement, we found that they were no other than a few officers' servants who had been having a spree in town, and who had arranged beforehand with Curran to let them in on the quiet; hence the mystery attached to the sentry's movements.

The affair had now a most ludicrous aspect. Peal after peal of laughter arose from the constables and the men of the detachment; and the over-sharp detective-recruit Coghlan looked remarkably sheepish in the face of the fierce fire of 'chaff' with which he was assailed from all quarters. Still, much had to be explained in connection with the meetings at the *Harp*, which Coghlan, anxious to make a case, reported to the major; so that officer, amid suppressed laughter, ordered O'Neill and Curran under close arrest, and the men back to bed. At the suggestion of the police inspector, the major granted Coghlan leave of absence, and he left barracks with the detachment of constabulary.

The next morning the prisoners were taken before the major; and the landlord of the *Harp* having, at O'Neill's request, attended to give evidence, proved in the most satisfactory and conclusive manner that the fancied conspirators who frequented his house were nothing more nor less than a few betting-men, who were more concerned about 'backing the winner' than troubling themselves about the wrongs of their country; and while Coghlan imagined they were engaged in plotting the overthrow of Saxon rule in Ireland, they were merely discussing the 'odds' on the forthcoming races at the Curragh.

Curran explained that the mysterious missives that reached him from time to time were simply sporting 'tips'—most likely of very doubtful value—which he had received from betting-men residing in different parts of the country.

O'Neill and Curran, it appeared, had both most pronounced 'horsey' tastes, and in pursuit of their

hobby, had made no scruple of defying military regulations by venturing 'out of bounds.' Their conversation of the previous morning had confirmed a suspicion within Coghlan's mind that they were in league with the Fenians, and that they intended stealing the arms with the assistance of civilian confederates; to which the action of Curran in surreptitiously admitting the servants readily gave colour. As it was, the remark 'After the arms are stored' merely referred to the time when O'Neill would be disengaged to meet a member of the betting fraternity outside. Coghlan, who had all along been in communication with the police authorities, had at once arranged to have a party of constabulary within hail.

The major, with an absurd attempt to screw his face into an expression of extreme severity, sharply reprimanded O'Neill and Curran, and released them, after threatening them with all the pains and penalties of military law if they came before him again on a similar charge.

Then the landlord of the *Harp* spoke out, and complained of the injustice done to his house, which, he maintained, had been always conducted in a respectable manner. The result was that the major removed the ban from the hostelry, and the *Irish Harp* was read out in regimental orders as having been admitted 'within bounds.'

The men of the company, with whom colour-sergeant O'Neill was very popular, carried him shoulder-high to his quarters when he left the orderly-room. The captain, overjoyed at his acquittal from the serious charge against him, gave the men a sovereign to drink his health, which O'Neill supplemented with another; and when I came off guard, an exceedingly 'rough-and-tumble' jollification was being held in the barrack-rooms.

Whether Coghlan had received instructions to join the service in order to unearth the Fenians who were supposed to be in the army, or whether it was a speculation of his own, we were never able to discover. After a while, his name was read out in regimental orders as having been discharged at his own request, on payment of twenty pounds—a statement which occasioned a great deal of tittering among his late comrades. What became of him, I cannot tell, for, though we remained a year or two in Ireland, we never again heard of our Mysterious Recruit.

ROSE-CULTURE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE.

FROM A SOUTHERN CORRESPONDENT.

WITHIN the last few years, the culture of roses for the Paris and London markets has developed with extraordinary rapidity. Hundreds of boxes are forwarded by the mail-trains every day. The buds are picked just as they are breaking, and carefully packed in small boxes holding one hundred and upwards. The packing is a work of art. Generally, cotton-wool is placed between each layer of buds; but in one case we know of, the sender envelops each bud separately in silver-paper. The forwarding season commences

in November. The trees having been pruned in August or early in September, before the usual rains have fallen, burst out into prolific bearing early in November, and continue until March.

The culture of roses in the south of France has in many instances taken the place of the vines that have perished from disease. There is, however, so much trouble and nicety of arrangement required, that only the more intelligent of the cultivators have entered into the rose-trade. The daily picking, the selection of the buds at the right period of their development, the packing and forwarding, the formalities at the railway, are all difficulties that require skill and patience, combined with intelligence, to overcome.

Perhaps the best way of explaining this industry will be to describe two properties that are engaged in it, which we visited, one being on a large scale; the other a little plot. We will describe the larger one first. It consists of ten acres devoted to roses, planted four yards between the rows, and the plants are twenty inches apart in the rows. The proprietor said that force of circumstances was the cause of this distance of four yards, there having been vines between, which are now dead from *Phylloxera*. If he were planting anew, one yard between the rows would suffice. The *Saffranos*, or tea-rose, of which there are several varieties, is almost the only rose cultivated for export, though a few of the *Gloire de Dijon* and *La Noisette de la Marque* are occasionally sent off.

The cultivation is as follows: The ground is trenched thirty inches deep, and plants reared from cuttings are planted at about eighteen months old. They are left alone throughout the summer, during which, owing to the absence of rain, vegetation is almost dormant; and at the end of August or beginning of September, just before the rains come, the trees are pruned. The cuttings are all planted in the nursery. A great proportion of them seem to fail, from some cause or other. Early in November, the plants begin to bear, and the exportation commences. The old plan of cotton-wool has been superseded on this property by the following method of packing: Shallow oblong boxes, ten inches long by six broad, and three inches deep, have a large sheet of white paper put in the bottom, with the ends projecting on either side. On this, layer after layer of rosebuds is placed, one on the other, until one hundred and fifty are carefully arranged. Then a layer of damp moss is put on the top, the white paper is folded over, and the top is nailed down. Three of these boxes are tied together, making about eleven pounds in weight, the specified allowance for parcels.

The charge from Southern France to Paris is one shilling, the distance being about six hundred miles; and this charge is advanced very little for any place upon the continent. But on from Paris to London, for a distance of two hundred miles, the charge is over three shillings. Indeed, we ought to have said from Calais or Boulogne to London, for the French rate is the same to any part of France.

The cultivation of the rose is exceedingly simple, though by no means inexpensive. First

the deep trenching; secondly, a good dressing of stable-manure is required every second year; thirdly, there must be water at command, not merely water supplied by a can, but water in sufficient quantity to run in a good stream and thoroughly flood the plants. In good soil where water is available, simple cuttings are preferred; but on the higher ground, especially on the limestone, they should be grafted on the brier. Such are much harder, and resist the drought in a surprising manner.

The smaller garden we visited was one managed and worked entirely by the owner. The plants were about one yard apart in the rows, and some two yards between the rows. Constant attention to hoeing, the strongest liquid and solid manure applied to each plant separately, were the chief features of this little plot. The owner sold his rosebuds on the spot to an *expéditeur* or forwarder, the price from November to March being one halfpenny per bud, by contract for the season.

The wholesale price in Paris and London during November is generally from sevenpence to a shilling per dozen buds. We have stated enough to show that there are over two thousand plants to the acre. As we write, many of these plants have fully thirty buds, and you may cut and come again. Now, as the price to the larger owner per bud ranges from one halfpenny to twopence-halfpenny, the returns must be handsome indeed. No doubt the outlay is great; but the master was outside directing, and the mistress was inside working with four other packers. We do not feel justified in publishing the returns the owner voluntarily gave us; suffice it to say they amount to something more than we ever heard of as the results of any crop. The smaller owner gave one shilling and threepence per plant as the probable return to him; but it must be remembered that he sells at home, and never gets beyond one halfpenny per bud. The fear now is that too many are going into the trade, and that the market will be overstocked; but at any rate, those who began a few years ago have made some very good hay while the sun has very brightly shone for them.

THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

A CHILD lay dying; but still her brow was clear.

Sad faces drooped around; but on her own

No shadow darkened. Was the end unknown

To her young heart? And struck with sudden fear

Least death should take her by surprise—'My dear,'

Her mother whispered, 'thou wilt soon be gone;

But oh, my lamb will not be left alone:

Thou art in death's dark vale; but He is near.'

The child looked wondering in her mother's face.

'I am in no dark vale,' she said, and smiled.

'I see the light; it is not dark at all!'

Love, thou didst light death's valley for that child;

And to the child-like soul that trusts thy grace,

Thus wilt thou come when death's dark shadows fall!

P. W. R.

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